



CITY COUNCIL

Open Government, Rules & Intergovernmental Relations Committee

**Monday, August 6, 2012
Meeting Report**

Attendance: D. Reed, S. Marmarou, D. Sterner Chair

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, C. Snyder

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm by Mr. Sterner.

I. Update Welcome to Reading Guidebook

Mr. Sterner stated that Council staff has offered to review the guidebook and suggest corrections. He stated that the Administration would have final review and arrange for printing and distribution. He noted his hope that this project be complete in 2013.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he has several guidebooks that he has corrected. He stated that he welcomes new neighbors and provides a copy of the guidebook.

Ms. Snyder stated that the City's new website will be public in September. She noted her hope that the website and guidebook contain the same information. She stated that printing costs are being researched and that a City printer would be used.

Mr. Sterner suggested selling ads or having sponsors. He stated that this will help offset the printing costs.

Ms. Snyder stated that a Spanish version is also being considered. She suggested that a separate set of sponsors be used for this version. Ms. Reed noted her support for a Spanish edition.

Ms. Snyder stated that she has been working to develop processes to simplify processes for citizens who need assistance with zoning, planning, etc. She stated that the processes should be complete by January 2013.

Ms. Reed noted her willingness to edit the guidebook.

Mr. Sterner stated that the key is to get the project moving forward. He suggested that Council staff begin their review and work with the Managing Director's office.

II. Ethics Training & Review

Ms. Snyder stated that she has no report on this issue. She stated that the solicitor is working on this issue.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that in the past the Board of Ethics assisted in preparing the training with brochures and forms. Ms. Snyder requested copies of the brochures. She stated that she will also be covering the need to file gift forms with the Clerk's office.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the Charter Board is also planning training sessions for this fall. Mr. Sterner suggested that Ms. Katzenmoyer follow up with the Charter Board.

III. Communications Policy

Mr. Sterner stated that there are many interpretations of the Communication Policy.

Ms. Snyder noted her disbelief of the number of messages in her Inbox related to complaints. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that this is necessary under the Communication Policy.

Ms. Snyder stated that much of the information needed for follow up on complaints should be noted in Hansen. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that many times the SR in Hansen shows the original complaint information but no follow up information.

Ms. Snyder stated that she is working with Mr. Agudo on this issue. She stated that there is no follow up after a Quality of Life ticket is issued as the CSC relies on residents to call to complain again if the issue is not corrected.

Mr. Sterner stated that many times Council and Council staff hear complaints from residents who report issues that are not corrected.

Ms. Katzenmoyer noted her understanding of not following up on Quality of Life tickets as that is the point of the program but noted that without real closure of the issue, the complaint remains open to Council staff. Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Kersley is reviewing this issue. She suggested that SRs be sortable by address for follow up while PMIs are in specific areas.

Mr. Marmarou noted the frustration voiced by citizens who see no action taken by the City after issues are reported.

Ms. Snyder stated that she is reviewing processes for all these issues.

Ms. Reed updated Ms. Snyder on the problems with the Citizens Advisory Board and the Water Authority. Ms. Snyder stated that she is reviewing the Act 47 recommendations regarding citizen input. She noted that there are many opportunities for citizens.

Ms. Reed stated that she attends Citizens Advisory Board meetings. She stated that this Board needs a clearer mission.

Mr. Sterner brought discussion back to the Communication Policy. He stated that Council staff is having difficulties assisting citizens and Council members due to their difficulty in getting information from other employees. Ms. Snyder stated that she is reviewing this policy. She suggested assembling several examples of routine requests to show employees what types of information can be shared without Administrative permission.

Ms. Snyder questioned the fear expressed in Ms. Katzenmoyer's response memo.

Mr. Corcoran joined the meeting at this time.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that there is disciplinary language in the policy memo and showed the memo to Ms. Snyder. She explained that others fear speaking with Council staff and Council staff fears speaking with others because of the threat of discipline.

Ms. Snyder questioned if this language was included in other policies. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that it is not.

There was a brief discussion about the Media Policy and speaking with the press.

Mr. Sterner thanked Ms. Snyder for attending and noted the good discussion. Ms. Snyder stated that she will be attending the committee for which she will be best able to assist and that she will be addressing the backlog of follow up items on all Committee agendas. She stated that the City has a great staff and that processes are moving forward.

Mr. Sterner noted that the lack of processes has always been an issue with the City.

Mr. Corcoran stated that the Market Value Analysis will also help move the City forward.

Ms. Reed noted the need for Council to hear a presentation on the Market Value Analysis (MVA). She stated that Council will be questioned by those who have not seen the MVA. She stated that Council cannot answer the questions without the information. Ms. Snyder noted her understanding that Council is put in the position of trying to address questions without information.

Ms. Reed noted the need for a cohesive government appearance to residents.

Mr. Corcoran expressed his belief that Council has been circumvented out of the MVA process.

Mr. Sterner expressed his belief that many of these issues are due to the difficulties with the Administrative transition. Ms. Snyder stated that this is very unfortunate.

The Open Government, Rules, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk